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Algernon B. Roberts

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Alfred B. Phillips

Pennsylvania. General assembly. Senate.

MEMORIAL

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SENATE

UPON THE DEATH OF

HON. ALGERNON B. ROBERTS,

LATE A SENATOR FROM THE TWELFTH DISTRICT

OF

PENNSYLVANIA.



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EXCHANGE





RESOLUTION.

In the Senate,
March 23, 1909.

Resolved, (if the House of Representatives concur), That one thousand (1,000) copies of the proceedings of the Memorial services, held in honor of the late Honorable Algernon B. Roberts, be printed for the use of the Senate.

HARMON M. KEPHART.

Chief Clerk of the Senate.

The foregoing resolution concurred in March 23, 1909.

THOMAS H. GARVIN,

Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Approved—The 24th day of March, A. D. 1909.

EDWIN S. STUART.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE SENATE

UPON THE DEATH OF

HON. ALGERNON B. ROBERTS.

In the Senate,
Monday, March 15, 1909.

On motion of Senator McIlhenny, the following resolution was twice read, considered and agreed to, viz:

Resolved, That a committee of eight members of the Senate be appointed to draft suitable resolutions on the death of the late Senator, Algernon B. Roberts, who died on January six, one thousand nine hundred and nine, and present such resolutions at a special meeting to be held on Tuesday, March sixteen, one thousand nine hundred and nine, at four o'clock post meridian,



MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS AND ADDRESSES.

In the Senate,
Tuesday, March 16, 1909.

Afternoon Session.

Pursuant to adjournment, the Senate was called to order at four o'clock post meridian, Mr. Sproul in the chair.

PRAYER.

Prayer was offered by Reverend J. Wesley Sullivan, Chaplain of the Senate, as follows:

O, Lord, we come to praise Thee at this time for the great value of life and for the life that Thou dost give unto each one of us, for Thou art the creator and giver of all life; and yet we realize that it is not all of life to live and yet of death to die, but beyond is the judgment and we must come unto Thy presence, we must render an account to Thee of our stewardship; the time when friends cannot follow us or support us, but when we must stand alone in Thy presence as the work and the creation of Thy hand. Thou dost admonish each one of us that we should set our house in order, that sooner or later we shall die and not live. We may at times realize our strength and we forget that we must die, but when we look upon the right hand and upon the left, we see loved ones, friends and companions leaving us and going down into the dark valley of the shadow of death and we are reminded that sooner or later this shall be our journey. Our desire is to-day that when this message shall come to us our

house be in order and we shall be ready to meet Thee and to have Thy benediction and blessing to rest upon us throughout the ages of eternity.

We thank Thee for the memory of the dead, that as we journey with those we love, that when they come to leave us, we can see the lessons that their lives teach us, the right way. We thank Thee for this special life this afternoon that we come to recognize and remember. Help us to see in it all the good that it may be an inspiration to our lives, a comfort to us in the hour of bereavement, especially this afternoon to those who are near and dear to this grand and noble life that has vanished from this sphere and has gone into the great eternity. Remember this afternoon those who bow beneath this great shadow, this bereaved woman who stands alone to-day as no other in the wide world with her sorrow. Remember this widow and pour into this heart of mourning this afternoon Thy oil of gladness and Thy comfort. Remember the beloved children; may the inheritance of such a beloved life as this noble father be an inspiration and comfort to them. Be with these and all who bow down in mourning. Pardon all that Thou dost see amiss within us. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer. Amen.

Mr. McILHENNY. Mr. President, I offer the following resolutions:

RESOLUTIONS.

Whereas, Our fellow-Senator, Algernon Brooke Roberts, a member of the Senate of Pennsylvania, for the Twelfth District, has, during the present session of the Senate, passed into eternal rest; and

Whereas, His public character and services demand prominent commemoration; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate of Pennsylvania records its sense of his integrity, prudence, fidelity, high ideals, ability

and lofty character, and the great loss he is to this distinguished body; and

Resolved, That we, the members of the Senate surviving desire to express our sympathy to his family and direct that a copy of these resolutions, properly attested, be communicated, with our respect, to his widow.

FRANCIS S. McILHENNY,
JOHN E. FOX,
DANIEL P. GERBERICH,
WEBSTER GRIM,
THOMAS B. HARPER,
JOHN W. CRAWFORD,
A. E. SISSON,
ERNEST L. TUSTIN.

Committee.

ADDRESSES.

Mr. McILHENNY. Mr. President, The death of Senator Roberts has been a great loss to me, and these services in his memory are but a sad substitute for his companionship and friendship.

He and I knew each other many years. We studied law side by side in the same office, and when I joined him here we sat in adjoining seats in the Senate and lived together during its sessions.

It was my happiness to enjoy his personal and political confidence, and I perhaps am able to speak more intimately than any other Senator of the pure and patriotic character that animated all his work.

It may not be out of place, before I speak of his moral qualities, to briefly review a few facts of his life:

Algernon Brooke Roberts was born on August twelfth, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five, at Pencoyd Farm, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. His preliminary education was received at the Episcopal Academy, of Philadelphia, from whence he entered Princeton University, graduating in one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six. He then became a student of law in the University of Pennsylvania, upon his graduation was admitted to the bar in one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine, and for five years prior to his death was a member of the law firm of Duane, Morris, Heckscher and Roberts, of the city of Philadelphia.

Upon his admission to the bar he entered actively in Republican politics in Montgomery County. In one thousand nine hundred he was elected a commissioner of Lower Merion township, and, in the same year, Presidential elector-at-large. In one thousand nine hundred and one he was appointed Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and in the following year was elected president of Lower Merion township. In the same year he was elected to the Senate, and was re-elected in November, one thousand nine hundred and six. He died in Southern California on January sixth, one thousand nine hundred

and nine. As president of the board of commissioners he proved himself to be an efficient administrator, and under him that wealthy township enjoyed nearly a model government. It became the best paved township in the State and obtained an almost perfect sewerage system. This system was constructed at less than the estimated cost and by his efficient management has been able to greatly reduce the cost of operation. Capable and honest, his conduct of affairs in his township has left a high standard for his successors to maintain.

Opposed to him in his county were many powerful interests, and his leadership was only held by untiring energy and unusual political sagacity.

In the Senate his career is well known to my hearers. He was the author of the Corrupt Practices Act and was the foremost authority upon the law of townships. In his conduct in the Senate he was independent, and was never afraid to vote against his party upon important measures which he believed were not for the best interests of the State.

Senator Roberts was no ordinary man. Born to inherited wealth and position, he might have enjoyed a life of ease and pleasure, yet he chose rather a career of labor and responsibility. He could have pleased himself only, yet he gave his time and strength to the service of his county and State. Indeed, we may well say that his unsparing energy put his life to the hazard for his conscience's sake, and his physical body has paid the forfeit. His high sense of duty as a citizen was—

"The spur that the spirit clear doth raise
To scorn delights and live laborious days."

The service he rendered to the State was of the first order, because he possessed the happy union of a singularly high moral courage with a superior natural ability, cultivated by a thorough education.

As the proverb says—"There is a time to speak and a time to be silent." He was an eminently practical man who observed this wise maxim, and suffered trifles to pass that he might be effective in accomplishing larger things for the pub-

lic good. This public good was the lodestar which guided his course. I was in his confidence and I never knew him to seek to serve any interest, except the interest of his constituents and this Commonwealth.

Always a gentleman, always high-minded and courageous, he upheld the best traditions of the Senate of Pennsylvania.

His place will be filled, but his memory will ever hold its seat in the affections of those of us who knew him.

"Cold in the dust the perished heart may lie,
But that which warmed it once can never die."

He was endowed with what Cicero commends as the "boni Senatoris prudentia," the wisdom of a worthy Senator. He rendered to the State a worthy service, and he will be long remembered for his faithful attention to his duties, his accuracy of knowledge of parliamentary law, his skill in debate and his high purpose to serve the people of this great Commonwealth.

Senator Roberts passed away still a young man, but his little span of life had been not untouched with sorrow and trial; the loss of two children and other loved ones, the depression of ill health were his, yet his sorrow was borne with undaunted spirit and in every gathering none showed so cheerful and gay a spirit as he.

"Aye, he has gone to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns." A mysterious providence furnishes no answer to our question why this useful life should have been cut down in its promise and youth. But the proverb and our experience tell us that "it matters not how long one lives, but how well."

He lived well, he lived earnestly, he lived faithfully, and it is not for us mortals to dispute the Divine wisdom which has taken him to that eternal life beyond the river, where are gathered those who, thinking not of themselves, have fought the fight and kept the faith even unto death.

Mr. FOX. Mr. President, The loss of a friend is always accompanied by grief and pain, but when death robs us of one who has stood side by side with us, one with whom we

have been closely, warmly and affectionately associated, the loss seems to us to be almost irreparable. By the death of Senator Roberts this distinguished body, indeed, suffered a serious loss, for knowing him, we loved him. Friendship with him was delightful, fruitful and valuable. Some one has said, "The snows of yesterday hath vanished, yes, but in form only they are still present in life's bloom and beauty."

And so the life of the deceased is permanent and enduring, for it touched into activity forces of good in others that will live on and continue forever. His life will live in the affections of those who knew the nobility of this man and the kindness of his heart. It will be an example to others to strive to walk in the pathway of truth and light. The angel of peace which men call death has commanded him away from us. We lament that he is gone. He won our applause by his love for justice. He had won our affections by his nature of nobleness. He was patriotic, for he often spoke of his willingness to pay the price of diligent and laborious attention to the conduct of public affairs, which means a subtraction of labor and attention to one's private and personal interest for the freedom and dignity of American citizenship. He was, indeed, devoted to his community, to his State and to his nation, and, sir, all of them with industry and honor. His virtues and abilities confidently eclipsed any faults and failures that may have been imputed to him. But, Mr. President, and my fellow-Senators, the permanent characteristic of his nature was his love for his fellow-men. And what trait is more beautiful? That trait is superior to all others. The best part of a good man's life is the many little unremembered acts of kindness done toward his fellow-men, and when the recording angel shall reveal the record of this life, whatever sins of omission and commission may there be found, it is to be believed that they will be condoned by his love for his fellow-man. This thought was most beautifully expressed in the poem entitled "Abou Ben Adhem."

"Abou Ben Adhem—may his tribe increase!

Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace
And saw within the moonlight in his room
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,

An angel writing in a book of gold;
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still, and said, 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellowmen.'
The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed—
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!"

Mr. Sisson. Mr. President, it is with a feeling of great sadness that I join with you, brother-Senators, in paying tribute to the memory of our departed brother whose splendid qualities of head and heart have been so deeply impressed upon the memory of each and all of us who have observed his distinguished career in the Senate, that they will there remain so long as life shall last. When memories of him are recalled by me, they are and always will be accompanied by a feeling that it was a privilege and a continual pleasure to have known and been associated with him.

It is an occasion of sadness, of profound sorrow, augmented by the added consideration that his life, an example of fidelity, courage and usefulness, was cut short at a period when his greatest activity and usefulness as a citizen were just blossoming into most promising being, and when upon his highway of life the shadows still were falling to the west.

His active, ready and well-trained mind made him a most valuable member of this body, and it turned and held to the right as naturally as the needle to the pole. He was fearless in advocating, at all times, that which he believed to be right, and unhesitating in his opposition to that which he thought to be wrong.

He served in the Senate for four sessions, including the extra session of one thousand nine hundred and six, and he has so impressed his personality and genius upon many important statutes, of which he was either the author or advo-

cate, during that time, that the effect of what he did will here remain as long as the Commonwealth shall endure.

Too high tribute to his integrity and unswerving honesty cannot be paid.

His path of duty knew no devious ways. He followed it as it stretched out before him, turning neither to the right nor to the left, but pressing ever onward toward the goal of honor.

His lovable disposition, splendid social qualities, high order of intelligence, and purity of thought made his presence on any and every occasion profitable, much sought for, and greatly enjoyed by his brother-Senators, and by all who knew and came in contact with him.

He seems to have followed Bryant's suggestion, and so lived that when his summons came "to join the innumerable caravan, which moves to that mysterious realm, where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death," that "sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust," he approached his grave "like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

Mr. President, I second the resolutions.

Mr. GRIM. Mr. President, We stand to-day beside the open grave. With bared head and wounded spirit we look for the last time upon all that is mortal of the friend we loved. He is not here. His soul has escaped, by what means we know not, through the starry threshold of the Court of Heaven, and there, far above the noise and stir of this dim spot which men call earth, it rests in peace. Though deep grief at his parting fills our hearts, we face the inevitable truth that tears cannot alter the immutable laws of Providence. We restrain our tears and turn our thoughts to his life and career.

The graves of those we love! What a place for meditation! How it recalls to us the strong ties there severed! A thousand memories come crowding in upon us, all scenes in which the departed participated. Thank Heaven for blessed memories! Life would be drear without them. They

are the lighthouses of our existence, illuminating the dark places of life and dispelling the coldness of our natures.

Fellow-Senators, It was my good fortune to be upon more intimate terms of friendship with Senator Roberts than he was with almost any other member of the present Senate, and the recollection of our association will be kept green in my memory as long as life shall last. Time and again have we spent the hours together in that congeniality where hearts beat as one, and I learned to know him well. Coming as we did from the same Congressional district with many interests in common, and serving with him upon the joint Fish Commission, we were interested alike in legislation and many conferences were held between us.

It is not my purpose to speak to you of his ability and faithfulness as a legislator, nor even his lovable traits of character as a man that made him a leader among men. All these are known to every Senator who served with him in this body. But although his record is written, I may be pardoned in saying that it is my purpose as well as my privilege to again place upon the pages of our record the fact that he was an intelligent and conscientious public servant, faithful to duty as he saw it, and ready and willing at all times to aid in good legislation. He was courageous to a fault. He alone of the whole Senate had the courage to speak and vote against the soldiers' pension bill. His courage was again well-shown in passing the salary bill and in voting against two-cent mileage, and in a number of other measures he showed his independence of the party to which he always owed allegiance.

Although one of the youngest members of the Senate, he soon became one of the most prominent ones, and had he not been cut off too early in his career, he would have risen to become its presiding officer.

Some men become great because they are lifted up by others, but true merit and greatness lies in what we ourselves have done, and this only will endure. Our friend had just arrived upon the threshold of his opportunity and yet his

name has become indissolubly linked with legislative measures that shall endure better than marble or brass.

The courage and perseverance displayed in his duties in the Senate was well-shown in his determined fight against a disease that must necessarily have sapped his vitality and interfered with his best endeavors. With the knowledge of this gallant fight for life must go our added sympathy for his untimely death. But the result was inevitable. In his best estate man is a helpless creature, for well has the poet expressed it—

“’Tis the wink of an eye; ’tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,
From the gilded salon to the bier and the shroud,
Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?”

We are all alike in death. No matter what position in life we may have occupied; no matter to what age we may have attained; no matter at what altar we may have bowed in reverence, death makes all things even, and it is well that it is so.

Some one has said that the world is not a place to live in, but to die in. That there is not a spot on the broad earth on which man can plant his foot and affirm with confidence “No mortal sleeps beneath.” I cannot agree with this statement. I believe that this life was created to live in, to be enjoyed, and as a preparation for the world to come. I believe that our brother had the right conception of life, and he made the most of his opportunity. It is for us to emulate his virtues. Let us, then, so live that when the summons comes to us to join that mysterious caravan that moves to the pale realms of shade where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death.

“Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night scoured to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave, like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

Let us draw from the examples of the dead, lessons of eternal fidelity to the living, and in this light, well can we

say that our brother has not lived and died in vain, for from his life and career, can be drawn many laudable things which we would do well to emulate. As a rule, most men born with the golden spoon contribute little to the sum total of human happiness. Not so with our brother, and thousands there are to-day who can testify to his democratic simplicity and his great interest in and love for his fellow-man. The world was better for his having lived and many there are who will miss him for many years to come.

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.
For tho' from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar."

Mr. President, I second the resolutions.

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Sproul). I cannot let this occasion go by, considering the intimacy of my own association with Senator Roberts, without saying something to his memory, and I know nothing more fitting than to repeat, or at least read, his own favorite poem, and I recall one night when a little coterie, which used to meet after the sessions of the Senate in a room at the Harrisburg Club, where so many things had been discussed, had all dwindled away except Senator Roberts and myself. We talked about various matters, and he finally drew from his pocketbook the poem, to which Senator Grim alluded, the poem written by that other Scotchman, William Knox, and which was the favorite of Lincoln, as well as Senator Roberts. He drew this from his purse and read it to me, and if I may transgress I would

like to read Senator Roberts' favorite poem on this occasion. And, if I may say, too, that his father, being stricken in youth and a man who had all that wealth and all that education and culture and all that social position and ability could give him, taken away in the prime of his life, in the full tide of his usefulness, the words of this poem are brought back to me more forcibly, perhaps, than ever before in my life. Not long ago, seeing this I cut it out and put it in my own pocket to read and think over. I am glad I have it on this occasion:

MORTALITY.

"Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
Man passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around, and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the high
Shall molder to dust and together shall lie.

The infant a mother attended and loved;
The mother that infant's affection who proved;
The husband that mother and infant who blessed,—
Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye,
Shone beauty and pleasure,—her triumphs are by;
And the memory of those who loved her and praised
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the king that the sceptre hath borne;
The brow of the priest that the mitre hath worn;
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,
Are hidden and lost in the depth of the grave.

The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap;
The herdsman who climbed with his goats up the steep;
The beggar who wandered in search of his bread,
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint who enjoyed the communion of heaven;
The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven;
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.

So the multitude goes, like the flowers or the weed
That withers away to let others succeed;
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,
To repeat every tale that has often been told.

For we are the same our fathers have been;
 We see the same sights our fathers have seen;
 We drink the same stream, and view the same sun,
 And run the same course our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would think;
 From the death we are shrinking our fathers would shrink;
 To the life we are clinging they also would cling;
 But it speeds for us all, like a bird on the wing.

They loved, but the story we cannot unfold;
 They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is cold;
 They grieved, but no wall from their slumbers will come;
 They joyed, but the tongue of their gladness is dumb.

They died, aye! they died; and we things that are now,
 Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,
 Who make in their dwelling a transient abode,
 Meet the things that they met on their pilgrimage road.

Yea! hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,
 We mingle together in sunshine and rain;
 And the smiles and the tears, the song and the dirge,
 Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,
 From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,
 From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud,—
 Oh! why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

The question being,

Will the Senate agree to the resolutions?

The PRESIDENT. The Clerk will proceed to call the roll.

The roll was called by the Clerk as follows:

YEAS.

Messrs. Baldwin, Campbell, Catlin, Crawford, Crow, De-
 walt, Dimeling, Durham, Fox, Gerberich, Grim, Harper,
 Hays, Herbst, Homsher, James, Jamison, Keyser, Kline,
 Klinedinst, Kurtz, Langfitt, Manbeck, Martin, McConnell,
 McIlhenny, McNichol, Miller (Northampton), Miller
 (Bedford), Murphy, Riley, Rodgers, Rowland, Shields,
 Sisson, Snyder, Sproul, Templeton, Thomson, Tustin, Vare,
 Walton, Weingartner, Wertz, Wilbert and Wolf.

ABSENT OR NOT VOTING.

Messrs. Blewitt, Cochran, Hall and Hulings.

The PRESIDENT. The resolutions are unanimously adopted and will be recorded on the Journal of the Senate.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. TUSTIN. Mr. President, I move that the Senate do now adjourn.

Mr. HERBST. Mr. President, I second the motion.

The question being,

Will the Senate agree to the motion?

It was agreed to.

Whereupon,

At four-forty o'clock post meridian, the Senate adjourned to meet on Wednesday, March seventeen, one thousand nine hundred and nine, at ten o'clock ante meridian.







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